

## He Does the Things He Does

by Anthony Franklin

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Papers and documents smother  
The mahogany wood of his writing desk.  
He can hear the raspy smoker voice of his witness,  
"I saw a white man", "Whiter than that paper", "No, not hispanic",  
Torturing his unsettled mind with their mocking tones.  
They too will escape with his client.

He might as well have witnessed the murder,  
For his client described his brutality in comprehensive detail,  
Painting the drug trade with those iniquitous words and that sly smile.  
In fact, he sometimes dreams he was in that alley,  
Listening to the trickle of the gutters,  
Watching the scene through the dim light of a lamppost,  
Smelling the rotting meat of garbage bins lining the walls.

The walls would loom over him, higher than he could see.  
And the concrete floor, blackened, too far away from  
The rays of light, shifted uneasily beneath his feet.  
Sometimes his client would come up behind him,  
Creeping with the shadows that floated around,  
And the client standing, seemingly absorbing  
All the light from the lamppost,  
Illuminating a bright, young  
Face full of life,  
Longing.

Other times he is his client,  
Slithering atop the uneasy floor,  
Pointing the solid black handgun,  
Pulling the immense weight of the trigger,  
Watching the victim's face turn dead and cold.

He always wakes up, jolting,  
Face sweaty and chilled,  
And he hears the constant mellow breath of his wife.  
Then he goes to see the children's eyes flutter in their sleep,  
And he is reminded why...